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My name is Deborah Ball. I am a former public school elementary school teacher and currently professor and dean of the School of Education at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

My goal today is to provide you with an overview of the problem that is often called "teacher quality" and to tell you about a major redesign of how we train teachers at the University of Michigan. Our goal is not merely to redesign our own program, but to develop curriculum, assessments, and other tools that can be adopted by other programs, whether in "alternative routes" or located in universities or colleges.

I hope you will remember two things from my presentation:

First, what we are doing in this country is unethical. We let people start teaching who have not yet demonstrated that they can perform. And, further, the students who most need skillful and highly effective teachers are not getting them.

Second, we know how to change this. I will explain the key elements of what it will take.

The problem is that we do not have a coherent system to supply skilled teachers to every classroom and to every student in this country. This is a problem of crisis proportions when we consider the persistent underachievement of American young people, and of schools that lack the resources and expertise to prepare our youth for this rapidly changing global world. It is urgent that we remedy this.

Many people have ideas about improving "teacher quality." Some proposals focus on how to identify and fire incompetent teachers. Other seek to increase the pay of teachers who are effective in producing student learning. Still others create incentives to attract more bright people to the teaching profession. Although these all make sense, at least in part, not one of them sufficiently addresses the core problem: that of ensuring that every teacher, in every classroom, can do the work we are asking of them. What we need is quality <u>teaching</u>. This is a problem of training, both initial and continuing, and not merely one of sanctions, rewards, or other incentives.

There are two reasons why: First, despite how commonplace it may seem, teaching is not simple work. Doing it well requires detailed knowledge of the domain being taught, a great deal of precision and skill in making it learnable. It also requires good judgment and a tremendous capacity to relate to a wide range of young people. And as we seek to increase the academic standards and demands that we want our young people to meet, the challenges will only escalate.

Second, building teaching quality is a problem of massive scale. The teaching force numbers almost four million—a staggering size. No other occupation even comes close. This means that it is crucial that we create high quality teacher education and professional development that will help large numbers of regular people develop the ability to teach effectively, whoever their students are. Simply recruiting bright people to the profession or providing incentives to effective teachers cannot come even close to solving the problem. Being bright or accomplished does not mean that one is able to make one's expertise visible to others. But even if very smart and highly educated people could teach effectively without training, there are just not enough such people to fill every classroom in this country.

At the University of Michigan we are building a system that will help guarantee that *all* beginning

teachers can perform competently from their first day in the classroom. Right now, teachers are considered "qualified" simply by virtue of graduating from an accredited program. We intend to redirect attention from teachers' educational credentials to their proven capacity to do the work that will help their students learn. This work on the initial training of teachers is part of a larger plan to design a comprehensive curriculum of professional training and licensure that spans pre-service education through at least the first five years of teaching practice, with corresponding assessments providing information about teachers' increasing competence as they become more experienced. This approach is a significant departure from current practice in which teachers start teaching with little training in the complex work of teaching and are expected to learn this work from experience.

There are three key elements to our redesign:

1. focusing teachers' preparation on the work of teaching to high levels of skill;
2. designing a range of settings for close practice and feedback so that teachers can be deliberately taught and explicitly coached with the skills to reach a wide range of learners; and
3. developing highly credible and predictive assessments of professional knowledge and skill so that no one enters a classroom without fundamental capacity for effective performance as a teacher.

To do this we began by identifying the set of core skills of teaching that are crucial to student learning. No beginning teacher should be allowed to teach young people if he or she cannot perform these flexibly and skillfully. These include skills of communicating content clearly to students, holding students to high standards while explicitly showing students how to do complex work, establishing a productive classroom climate, interpreting and evaluating students' work, and connecting effectively with students' families. Because teaching is always about teaching something, we are also identifying the specifically detailed knowledge of subject matter that teachers need to help students learn it.

What we are doing now is building an explicit curriculum to develop teachers' skills with these tasks and to design performance assessments that will allow us to determine whether teacher candidates can perform each one competently. This curriculum will also include carefully designed and sequenced opportunities to practice these skills in a variety of settings. We will require our students to demonstrate proficient performance with each set of skills before they graduate from our program and before we recommend them for an initial teaching license.

We seek to contribute to building a professionally valid licensure system—one that requires all teacher candidates to demonstrate the required level of capacity to teach young children responsibly. The assessments will focus on measuring teachers' content knowledge used for teaching, their actual skill with the instructional practices most important for student learning; and their persistence in working to make sure that every one of their students learns. These assessments will be different from the ones we currently have in this country which do not, for the most part, focus on the ability to teach. They will rigorously measure teachers' ability to mobilize knowledge in teaching and to do actual tasks of teaching. Examples include diagnosing students' learning difficulties, designing a test, conducting a discussion, giving pupils feedback on their work, and choosing and using strategic instructional examples.

My argument is not an argument for or against either "traditional" or "alternative" pathways into teaching. We should encourage multiple pathways into teaching and multiple providers of training in order to recruit the diverse teaching force that our country needs. What is most important is that graduates of any pathway must be capable of effective practice.

Students must have teachers who are prepared to help them learn, not beginners who are

struggling with or naïve about their responsibilities. Allowing teachers to learn on our young people is unethical. Teaching is intricate work that can be learned to high levels of skill with appropriate training. What we need in this country is a professional continuum that would provide teachers with high-quality training in more and more advanced practice, and that would tie their continued advancement in the profession to their ability to demonstrate higher levels of professional skill.

These are the principles around which the School of Education at the University of Michigan is reinventing its educator preparation program. My written testimony, included in your packets, describes important changes that must be made in our nation's educational infrastructure to address the problem of quality teaching just discussed. These include the organization of schools, teachers' work, and their compensation; and a common and ambitious curriculum for K-12 schools. These changes are essential to moving us forward toward realizing a coherent system for supplying skilled teachers to every classroom and every student in this country. I hope you will look at my written statement to see these details.

The most important point overall is that we must stop debating whether teachers recruited one way or another are more effective. Instead, we must turn now to training people to do the real work of teaching and to building a system that can reliably supply good teaching to every pupil in our nation's classrooms, every year.